REMARKS

Status of Claims

Prior to further examination and responsive to the final Office Action dated December 23, 2004, applicant respectfully requests consideration based on the amendments and remarks made in this Submission. Claims 1-16 were pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended, no claims have been cancelled, and claim 17 has been newly added. Therefore, claims 1-17 are pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration. Applicant notes that claim 1 has been amended to better define the invention and amendment does not narrow its scope in any way.

This Submission changes and adds claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, are presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Prior Art Rejection(s)

In the Office Action, claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 5,719,681 to Sasanuma (hereafter "Sasanuma"). Claims 2-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasanuma in view of U.S. patent 5,936,741 to Burns (hereafter "Burns"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Applicant respectfully submits that several of the recited features in independent claim 1 (and new claim 17) are not disclosed or suggested by the applied prior art. Specifically, the Office Action states that Sasanuma discloses an image forming apparatus for forming an image on an image forming medium and capable of forming a specific hidden pattern for specifying an apparatus at a specific position on said medium, said apparatus comprises hardware control signal supplying means (figure 2 (409) of Sasanuma), software control signal supplying means (figure 2 (414) of Sasanuma), and specific hidden pattern control signal synthesizing means (figure 2 (414) of Sasanuma) for synthesizing a control signal by which said specific hidden pattern is *necessarily formed* on an output image when either the hardware signal or the software signal exists.

However, applicant submits that Sasanuma does not disclose at least the following two recited features. *First,* even though the Office Action states that "a software control signal (PS) for determining _whether_ said specific hidden pattern is added to a color image (column 9, lines 55-60 of Sasanuma)", Sasanuma only discloses that "One of the value P1-P4 is selected according to the pattern level selection signal PS designated by the CPU 414 and the value is supplied through the AND gate 911 to the adder 912 where a pattern signal is added to an input signal V. The signal obtained by the adder 912 is output as a signal V'." Therefore, this cited portion of Sasanuma only discloses that a pattern signal is added to an input signal, and does not disclose or suggest _whether_ said specific hidden pattern is added to a color image, as required by the recited claim element on which the Office Action reads this part of Sasanuma's disclosure. Therefore, the claimed software control signal supplying means is not disclosed or suggested by Sasanuma.

Second, even though the Office Action asserts that "said specific hidden pattern is necessarily formed on an output image when either the hardware signal or the software signal exists (column 10, lines 55-62 of Sasanuma)", the cited portion of Sasanuma only discloses "The procedure of setting the pattern level selection signal PS executed by the CPU 414 is described with reference to the flowchart of FIG 15. Immediately after the start of copying at step S1102. "0" is set in the pattern level selection signal PS. At step S1103, the present determination level H and the value of PS are compared. If H is greater, the value of H is set in PS at step S1104. If H is not greater, the process returns to step S1103." Therefore, nowhere does Sasanuma disclose that "the specific hidden pattern is necessarily formed on an output image when either the hardware signal or the software signal exists." In fact, this cited portion appears to suggest that the value of PS is set based on the value of H, and this teaches away from the claimed feature when the specific hidden pattern is necessarily added when either the hardware signal or the software signal exists.

Since these recited features in independent claim 1 and 17 are not disclosed by the applied references, the independent claims are patentable over the applied prior art.

The remaining dependent claims are also allowable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims on which they ultimately depend. In addition, they recite additional patentable when considered as a whole.

-8-

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding the application, or if an examiner's amendment would facilitate the allowance of one or more of the claims, the examiner is courteously invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number below.

> Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicant hereby petitions for any needed extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

Date June 23, 2005

By _Aaron C. Chatterjee_

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone:　(202) 672-5485
Facsimile:　(202) 672-5399

Pavan K. Agarwal
Registration No. 40,888

Aaron C. Chatterjee
Registration No. 41,398

Attorneys for Applicant

-9-